

Mr. Speaker, I hope my colleagues will join me in honoring the members of the Flying Tigers for their brave service to our great country.

RECOGNIZING JODY BRUCE AND JOSH HOFFMAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Dakota (Mr. CRAMER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. CRAMER. The author Henry Miller wrote: "The ordinary man is involved in action, the hero acts, an immense difference."

Mr. Speaker, having grown up the son of a rural electric lineman, I am more than a little familiar with the not so ordinary actions of these rather ordinary people.

They do a job most of us won't or can't do, often putting themselves in danger's way as they carry out their duties in all kinds of weather conditions. They earn a paycheck for their work for sure, but their contribution to the quality of life of rural America is to the benefit of millions of people.

But today, Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize the extraordinary efforts of two rural electric linemen from North Dakota who stepped beyond being involved in the action to act.

Jody Bruce from Minot, who works for Verendrye Electric Cooperative, and Josh Hoffman from Carrington, who works for Northern Plains Electric Cooperative, left the comfort zone of middle America to facilitate the advent of safe, reliable, and affordable electricity in a community in Haiti.

Their service and sacrifice will improve the lives of many people because electricity is a critical element to improve quality of life, health care, education, clean water, and other vital services.

Volunteering their time and expertise, they both spent 2 weeks in the town of Caracol, providing safety training and mentoring for local linemen. They also assisted with installing power for residents located next to an industrial park. When fully functional, this facility will have the capacity to employ 30,000 people.

Jody and Josh are the only linemen from North Dakota to ever participate in such a project in Haiti, a country where only about 13 percent of the people have reliable access to electricity.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association International Foundation has been working on a U.S. Agency for International Development-funded program to bring electricity to the town of Caracol and nearby areas.

Today, more than 1,200 consumers in the town have access to reliable electricity. Some homes now have antennas for their TVs. In fact, some businesses are springing up, things like Internet cafes that have been established, and water treatment plants are in full operation.

While we often take for granted such basic amenities as safe, reliable elec-

tricity in this country, we ought to say a prayer for the men and women who ensure that the lights are always on for us and the families who wait for them at home.

In the case of Jody Bruce and Josh Hoffman, well, they deserve a ticker-tape parade. They, Mr. Speaker, are international heroes.

GRANT THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA STATEHOOD IN THE UNION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) for 5 minutes.

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I began this series of remarks yesterday as the District prepares for Emancipation Day on April 16, when Lincoln freed the slaves in the District of Columbia before the national Emancipation Proclamation.

I began with the status of all the citizens of the District of Columbia today with "Taxation Without Representation," the slogan the Founders of our Nation and the Framers of our Constitution used to start the revolution that created the United States of America itself. With those taxes should come statehood.

But if there is any issue with greater command than taxation without representation for statehood for the District of Columbia, it is surely fighting and dying for one's country without representation, securing the vote for the people of Iraq and Afghanistan, only to come home with no vote of your own in the Congress that sent you to war, or not coming home at all.

D.C. residents fought and died in the war that created the United States of America itself, and have served in every war since, often suffering casualties well beyond those of fellow Americans, casualties that mounted in each of the major wars of the 20th century: World War I, more casualties than three States; World War II, more casualties than four States; the Korean war, by then more casualties than eight States; and the Vietnam war, more casualties than 10 States of the Union.

Not only have thousands fought and died without the vote, many served with unusual distinction and many in the segregated Armed Forces, although African Americans in the District were outnumbered by Whites until recent years. Yet the District produced the first African American Army general, Benjamin O. Davis; the first African American Air Force general, Benjamin O. Davis, Jr., a graduate of West Point and commander of the Tuskegee Airmen; Wesley Davis, the first African American Naval Academy graduate; Charles Vernon Bush, the first African American Air Force Academy graduate, and the roster continues today—today the first Deputy Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, Admiral Manson Brown, and the first female African American aviator, D.C. National Guard First Lieutenant Demetria Elosiebo.

Our country continues to deny District of Columbia citizens their basic rights at home.

Today, we ask that Congress draw the line on service in the Armed Forces. In the name of those who have fought or died in the Nation's wars, grant the citizens of the District of Columbia equal rights with other Americans. Grant the District of Columbia statehood in the Union.

A LETTER TO THE TURKISH PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF) for 5 minutes.

Mr. SCHIFF. An open letter to the Turkish people:

Today, I write to you on an issue of great importance to both our nations. It is on a subject that many of you, especially the younger generation, may know little about because it concerns a chapter of world history that your government has expended enormous efforts to conceal.

Turkey has been at the center of human civilization from Neolithic times to the present, and your arts, culture, and science have enriched the world. But interwoven with all of Turkey's remarkable achievements is a dark chapter that too many of today's Turks know little or nothing about.

Were you aware that your grandparents and great-grandparents had many Armenian neighbors and friends—that 20 percent of the population of today's Istanbul was Armenian? Did you know that the Armenians were well integrated into Turkish society as celebrated intellectuals, artists, craftsmen, and community leaders? Have you ever wondered what happened to the Armenians? Have you ever asked your parents and grandparents how such a large, industrious, and prosperous people largely vanished from your midst? Do you know why your government goes to such lengths to conceal this part of your history?

Let me tell you a part of their story. The rest you must find out for yourselves.

Ninety-nine years ago this month, in the dying years of the Ottoman Empire, the Young Turk government launched a campaign of deportation, expropriation, starvation, and murder against the empire's Armenian citizens.

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Much of the Armenian population was forcibly removed to Syria, where many succumbed during brutal forced marches through the desert heat. Hundreds of thousands were massacred by Ottoman gendarmes, soldiers, and even their own neighbors.

By the time the slaughter ended in 1923, 1.5 million Armenians had been killed in what is now universally acknowledged as the first genocide of the 20th century. The survivors scattered throughout the Middle East and the

wider world, with some making their way to the United States and to Los Angeles.

It is their grandchildren and great-grandchildren whom I represent as a Member of the U.S. Congress. There is a vibrant community, many tens of thousands strong, with schools, churches, and businesses providing a daily link to their ancestral homeland. It is on their behalf that I urge you to begin anew a national conversation in Turkey about the events of 1915–1923.

As a young man or woman in Turkey, you might ask: What has this to do with me? Am I to blame for a crime committed long before I was born?

I would say this: yours is the moral responsibility to acknowledge the truth and to seek a reconciliation with the Armenian people that your parents and their parents could or would not. It is an obligation you have inherited and is one from which you must not shrink; for though we cannot choose our own history, we decide what to do about it, and you will be the ones to shape Turkey's future.

At the end of World War II, Germany was a shattered nation—defeated in battle and exposed as history's greatest war criminal—but in the decades since the end of the war, Germany has engaged in a prolonged effort to reconcile with the Jewish people, who were nearly exterminated by the Nazis during the Holocaust.

The German Government has prosecuted war criminals, returned expropriated property, allied itself with Israel, and made countless apologies to the victims and to the world. Most importantly, Germany has worked to expunge the cancer of the dehumanizing bigotry and hatred that gave rise to the Holocaust.

This path of reflection, reconciliation, and repentance must be Turkey's path as well. It will not be easy. The questions will be painful and the answers difficult, sometimes unknowable.

One question stands out: How could a nation that ruled peaceably over a diverse, multicultural empire for centuries have turned on one of its own peoples with such ruthlessness that an entirely new word had to be invented to describe what took place? "Genocide."

As in Judaism and Christianity, the concept of repentance—or *tawba*—is central to Islam. Next year will mark a century since the beginning of the genocide, and Armenians around the world will mourn their dead, contemplate the enormity of their loss, and ask: Why?

Answer them, please, with words of repentance.

Sincerely, ADAM SCHIFF, Member of Congress.

IN OPPOSITION TO THE RYAN BUDGET

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. MAFFEI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MAFFEI. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong opposition of the legislation H. Con. Res. 96, the budget proposed by the chairman of the Budget Committee, the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. RYAN).

Unfortunately, this year's Ryan budget is more of the same recklessness and extreme partisanship that we have seen year after year from the House Republican leadership.

According to the Democrats on the House Budget Committee, under RYAN'S plan, middle class families in my district in central New York will pay an average of \$2,000 more each year.

Once again, the Ryan budget ends the Medicare guarantee as we know it, and it would turn Medicare, instead, into a privatized voucher program and would shift health care costs to seniors.

It threatens to cut off critical investments in job creation and infrastructure, and it slashes education at a time when local school districts in central New York are already struggling to find the resources necessary to provide our children with the high-quality education that they deserve.

This is not a balanced approach, and it is not a responsible solution. People in central New York and across the country need better. Congress must get serious about balancing the budget and about reducing the national debt and deficit, but not on the backs of our seniors and not on the backs of the middle class and certainly not on the backs of future generations of Americans.

At a time when many central New Yorkers are still struggling as the economy recovers, we simply cannot accept the irresponsible policies of the Ryan budget.

I call on my colleagues to reject the Ryan budget and to work together to create a bipartisan budget that gets our fiscal house in order and promotes economic growth, creates jobs, protects our seniors, and strengthens the middle class.

RECENT EVIDENCE OF INFLATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. FOSTER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FOSTER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to take note of a recent scientific discovery, a result which, if confirmed and understood in its full theoretical context, has the potential to change the way we think about the beginnings of the universe.

Before coming to Congress, I was a high-energy particle physicist and a particle accelerator designer at Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory for over 20 years. While I sometimes miss being back in the lab, I am very pleased when I have the opportunity to advocate in Congress for scientific research and development.

Twice in my life, I have had the privilege of participating in a fundamental breakthrough in science. The first was during my Ph.D. thesis work

when we observed a subatomic process, known as proton decay—which was confidently predicted by many, if not most, of the theoretical physicists at the time—was, in fact, not happening.

The second time was at Fermilab, when I was part of the team that discovered the top quark, which is the heaviest known form of matter and, quite possibly, the heaviest subatomic particle that will ever be discovered—or not.

So like scientists around the world, my pulse quickened with the announcement that the first independent confirming evidence for cosmic inflation in the early universe had been discovered.

Humans have wondered about the origin of the universe for thousands of years. Now, thanks to a team of clever and hard-working scientists and of Federal investments in basic science, we appear to be an important step closer to understanding the birth of the universe.

Immediately following the big bang, which is the moment at which the universe burst into existence, scientists have hypothesized that the universe underwent a period known as inflation. During inflation, which lasted for only a tiny fraction of a second, the universe expanded at an exponential rate.

Now, the BICEP2 team, which is a collaboration of 12 institutes, including universities, the National Science Foundation, and the Department of Energy and NASA laboratories, has found direct evidence that appears to verify the theory of inflation.

They were able to study the very first moments of the universe at less than a trillionth of a trillionth of a trillionth of a second after the big bang, and they were able to obtain direct observational evidence of inflation, which, until now, has been mainly based on theoretical work.

To do this, the team constructed a telescope at the National Science Foundation's U.S. Antarctic Program's research station at the South Pole to observe the cosmic microwave background radiation, a faint glow left over from the big bang.

They observed a pattern in the cosmic background radiation that was consistent with being left over from inflation, giving us a glimpse of the universe over 13.7 billion years ago. They were able to detect this, in large part, because of recent advances in highly sensitive detector technology.

This project was primarily funded by the National Science Foundation, and it received generous support from NASA and from the Department of Energy, as well as from private industry, and it is an example of the importance of Federal funding for basic science research.

It is also an example of the interplay between technology and basic science and of how new technology will lead to even greater advances in basic science and vice versa.

Additionally, study after study has shown that there are few investments